

Message Text

SECRET

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61

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 011517Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5711

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 9289

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJECT: "CISCO TWO": RECOMMENDATIONS ON NEXT STEPS

REF: (A) STATE 169827; (B) ADDIS 9047; (C) ADDIS 9096;

(D) ASMARA 653; (E) STATE 179440; (F) KHARTOUM 1771

(G) ADDIS 9211

FOLLOWING ARE THOUGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON NEXT STEPS IN
"CISCO TWO" CONTEXT, PER REF (A).

1. EIGHTEEN DAYS HAVE NOW ELAPS SINCE THE ABDUCTION OF "CISCO TWO."
NO MESSAGE HAS YET REACHED US FROM THEM OR FROM THEIR ABDUCTORS.
ALLEGATIONS MADE CONCERNING THEM IN VARIOUS QUARTERS SEEMS THUS FAR
OF LIMITED USEFULNESS AND CREDIBILITY. WE THEREFORE DO NOT KNOW
THEIR WHEREABOUTS, THE IDENTITY OF THEIR CAPTORS, THE MOTIVATION
FOR THEIR ACT OR EVEN WHETHER THEY ARE STILL ALIVE. CISCO TWO'S
ALLEGED PRO-ERITREAN SYMPATHIES TO THE CONTRARY NOTWITHSTANDING,
WE ARE COMPELLED IN THE ABSENCE OF CONCRETE EVIDENCE TO ACT ON THE
ASSUMPTION THAT THEY HAVE BEEN FORCIBLY REMOVED FROM THEIR WORK SITE

2. THE PROBLEM WE CONFRONT, VIZ, TO LOCATE "CISCO TWO" AND ESTABLISH
CONTACT WITH THEM AND THEIR CAPTORS THUS REMAINS UNRESOLVED. WE
HAVE ATTACKED IT FROM SEVERAL DIRECTIONS:

(A) WE HAVE ASKED THE EPMG, PURSUANT TO ITS HOST GOVERNMENT
RESPONSIBILITIES, TO PRESS THE SEARCH FOR THESE MEN THROUGH ITS
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OWN RESOURCES AND CHANNELS. WE ARE ASSURED THAT THIS IS IN COURSE

AND HAVE COLLATERAL EVIDENCE TO SUBSTANTIATE THAT THIS IS SO.

(B) WE HAVE ASKED THE SUDANESE FOR THEIR GOOD OFFICERS AND HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THEY WILL COOPERATE.

(C) WE HAVE ASKED THE EPMG TO BROADCAST FAMILY MESSAGES ADDRESSED TO THE CISCO TWO BUT HAVE BEEN REFUSED. THE HARD REASONS FOR THIS REFUSAL ("INOPPORTUNE, UNHELPFUL") HAVE BEEN WITHHELD FROM US. THEY ARE PRESUMABLY RELATED TO THE SITUATION PREVAILING IN ERITREA AND TO RELATED POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES IN ADDIS. WE ARE THEREFORE ENTITLED TO BELIEVE, UNTIL SHOWN OTHERWISE, THAT THE EPMG WILL NOT REPEAT NOT SOON LET US USE ITS PUBLIC FACILITIES TO ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH CAMPBELL AND HARRELL.

(D) THE DEPARTMENT HAS BEFORE IT OUR SUGGESTION THAT WE USE VOA TO BROADCAST SUCH MESSAGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING CONTACT AND BEGINNING A DIALOGUE WITH THE KIDNAPPERS. WE WOULD WELCOME THE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION TO THE PROPOSAL. FROM HERE, VOA OPTION APPEARS TO HAVE ADVANTAGE OF U.S. CONTROL OF CONTENT AND FREQUENCY OF TRANSMISSIONS. IT HAS POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGE OF ASSOCIATING USG AB INITIO WITH "FAMILY APPEAL." WE DO KNOW THAT VOA-CARRIED FAMILY APPEAL AND WOULD QUICKLY COME TO THE ATTENTION OF PRESUMED ABDUCTORS AND/OR "CISCO TWO:" FROM ADDIS, THEREFORE, IT WOULD SEEM THAT ADVANTAGES OF VOA'S USE OUTWEIGHT POSSIBLE DRAWBACKS.

(E) IF DEPARTMENT SEES IMPEDIMENTS TO VOA'S USE, OTHER ALTERNATIVES COME TO MIND: RADIO CAIRO MAY PROVE ACCESSABLE TO US. RADIO BEIRUT SEEMS ANOTHER POSSIBILITY, AS DOES BBC. WE KNOW THAT THESE RADIOS ALL HAVE AN AUDIENCE IN ERITREA AND BELIEVE THAT AUTHORITIES WHICH CONTROL THEM MIGHT BE PURSUADED IF APPROACHED BY USG TO PERMIT TRANSMISSION OF NON-POLITICAL MESSAGES.

(F) AS "CISCO TWO" HAVE ERITREAN SPOUSES, THEIR NETWORKS OF FAMILY AND OTHER TIES PRESUMABLY ARE ALSO AVAILABLE TO US. WE WOULD BE SURPRISED, HOWEVER, IF SPOUSES ARE NOT ALREADY ON OWN INITIATIVE SEEKING TO ESTABLISH COMMUNICATIONS WITH MISSING MEN, ASSUMING AMERICANS WERE INDEED ABDUCTED OR WIVES UNIFORMED OF CAMPBELL/HARRELL'S PLANS - IF ANY - TO GO WILLINGLY UNDERGROUND. AT PRESENT, WE THEREFORE SEE REQUIREMENT ONLY FOR KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THEM TO MONITOR INFORMATION THEY MAYPASS ON.

(G) PRIVATE COVET CHANNELS; AT THIS STAGE WE WOULD DEFER USE OF SUCH CHANNELS IN ATTEMPT ESTABLISH CONTACT. IN ABSENCE ANY INDICATION OF CISCO TWO'S WELFARE AND WHEREABOUTS, THERE ARE SECRET

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JUST TOO MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHISELERS TO LEAD US ON ENDLESS WILD GOOSE CHASES. NATURALLY, THIS SHOULD NOT PRECLUDE US FROM CHECKING OUT LEADS AS BEST WE CAN OR CAUSE US TO ESCHEW USE OF USUALLY RELIABLE OFFICIAL CHANNELS TO PRESS SEARCH. IN SHORT, WE WISH DEFER USE OF COVET ALTERNATIVES FOR TIME WHEN MORE INFORMATION ENHANCES PROSPECTS FOR THEIR SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT.

3. ASMARA'S COMMENTS ON THE FOREGOING ARE INVITED.

HUMMEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: KIDNAPPING, INSTRUCTIONS, NEGOTIATIONS, TERRORISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ADDIS09289
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750266-0828
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750888/aaaaczju.tel
Line Count: 116
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 STATE 169827, 75 ADDIS ABABA 9047, 75 ADDIS ABABA 9096
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 AUG 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <08 DEC 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: "CISCO TWO": RECOMMENDATIONS ON NEXT STEPS
TAGS: PINS, ET, (CAMPBELL, STEVEN C), (HARRELL, JAMES J)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006